

And it shall come to pass in that day saith the Lord God,
that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will
darken the earth in the clear day. -- *Amos 8 : 9*

Then a tremendous flash of light cut across the sky...
It seemed a sheet of sun.---John Hersey, *Hiroshima*

The paradox of Project Atlas is to consider the inconceivable. The missile sites are underground, invisible, and untouchable, signifying a place where something could have happened but did not, reminding us that what has not yet happened may. They are the inverse of typical monuments: they (do not) mark what (has not) happened. To make invisible visible, we make the visible invisible; complacency is challenged by the extraordinary.

Throughout history, the solar eclipse has inspired myth; a portent of change, it signaled the death of kings, the end of nations, defeat in battle. We propose an eclipse machine which artificially creates a solar eclipse at the site. For seven minutes each day, the sun is removed from the sky; the scale of artificial and natural phenomena coincide. The machine is a synchronous satellite, approximately 420 km in diameter, constantly rotating above the site. Metal foil panels, pieced together in space and anchored to a lightweight aluminum space frame, compose the occulting disk. Manned research facilities, solar collection devices, and a space particle accelerator are housed in the machine. The abandoned Atlas missile sites are restored to their function as launching pads, but the technology of destruction is transformed into a technology of pure research. As the eclipse machine is completed, the sites are transformed into hotels, astronomical observatories, and a solar research center.

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